

I see the turkey standing there. [Laughter] He looks a little nervous, doesn't he? [Laughter] He probably thinks he's going to have a press conference. [Laughter]

I really appreciate you coming to watch me give this bird a Presidential pardon. I'm especially glad to see all the young people who are here. Thank you for coming—and such wonderful looking costumes. We welcome the Boys and Girls Clubs, the Boy Scouts, and school students from the Washington, DC, area. Thanks for coming to the White House.

I wish my dog Barney was here. [Laughter] But I'm afraid Barney would have met his match with that turkey. [Laughter] So we kept him inside.

I want to thank the Secretary of Agriculture for coming. Ann, it's great to see you. I appreciate all our distinguished guests for being here. I particularly want to thank Ron Prestage, who is the chairman of the National Turkey Federation. It turns out his dad, Bill, was the chairman of the National Turkey Federation. We kind of like father-and-son combos around here. [Laughter] It's also good to have Alice Johnson with us as well. Thank you all for coming.

The Thanksgiving proclamation which I signed this morning is a Presidential tradition which began with George Washington. The days of Thanksgiving are an American tradition. We've observed this tradition since the Pilgrims. Americans have always been a grateful people: We're grateful for our freedom; we're grateful for our families; we're grateful for our beautiful country.

Each year at Thanksgiving, we gather in that spirit to count our blessings and to share those blessings with our families and with others. On this holiday, American families will be thinking of loved ones far from home, especially members of our military, who defend our country.

We remember those in other lands who suffer under oppression, who long for freedom, and we pray that they might one day live in a world at peace and in a free society. And in this Nation of many faiths, we ask that the almighty God continue to bless us and to watch over us.

And now, as we look to our national day of Thanksgiving, I have the honor of carrying

out an important Presidential tradition. The bird's name is Katie. [Laughter] Ron, it was awfully nice of you to name that bird after your daughter. It's a high honor to be named—to have that turkey named after your child. And it's a fine looking turkey. [Laughter]

By virtue of this pardon, Katie is on her way not to the dinner table but to Kidwell Farm in Herndon, Virginia. There she'll live out her days as safe and comfortable as she can be.

Thank you all for coming. Happy Thanksgiving. I look forward to having a conversation with Katie. Let's do it.

[At this point, the President greeted audience members.]

All right, thank you all for coming. Happy Thanksgiving.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:26 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Alice Johnson, president, National Turkey Federation.

Message on the Observance of Hanukkah, 2002

November 26, 2002

I am pleased to send greetings to everyone celebrating Hanukkah, the festival of lights.

For eight days and nights, Hanukkah commemorates the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and the ancient story of Israel's courageous faith. In a victorious struggle against their oppressors, the Maccabees heroically overcame enormous odds to liberate the ancient kingdom of Israel. Hanukkah reminds us that faith can give us the strength to overcome oppression. Today, the spirit of the Maccabees continues to live and thrive among the Jewish people and in the State of Israel.

During the eight days of Hanukkah, Jews throughout the world gather with family and friends to rejoice and celebrate. Each night, they light a branch of the menorah to commemorate the miracle of the lamp that, with only enough oil for one day, burned in the ancient Temple for eight days. The festival of lights culminates on the eighth night when all the candles burn in unity, symbolizing the

eternal light of the Temple and the long-standing struggle of the Jewish people against adversity.

Americans join in thanking God for our blessings and renew our commitment to the values of faith, family, and community that make us strong. The candles of Hanukkah remind us that in the face of darkness, goodness will prevail.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a joyous Hanukkah.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Memorandum on the Establishment of the Department of Homeland Security

November 26, 2002

Memorandum to Federal Employees

Yesterday I signed into law legislation to create the new Department of Homeland Security. It will unite our efforts under one roof and behind one primary mission: to protect the American people from another terrorist attack.

Achieving that goal is my highest and most urgent priority as President. Our success is made possible by the hard work and unwavering dedication you've shown before and after September 11th. Americans owe you their gratitude for helping to keep their families safe and their communities secure.

As you know, the Department of Homeland Security will focus on three critical objectives to:

- Prevent terrorist attacks within the United States;
- Reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism; and
- Minimize the damage from potential attacks and natural disasters.

We will form the new Department as soon as possible. Under the terms of the initial plan I sent to the Congress, nearly all the affected agencies would be brought together on March 1 of next year.

We are assembling a great leadership team, made up of proven decision-makers who know how to get the job done. They share your vision and commitment to a more

secure homeland. I intend to nominate Governor Tom Ridge to serve as Secretary of the new Department of Homeland Security, Mr. Gordon England to serve as Deputy Secretary, and Mr. Asa Hutchinson to serve as Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security.

Many of you are familiar with Governor Tom Ridge. As the Nation's first Homeland Security Advisor, he exercised tremendous leadership on a complex, multifaceted topic. For him, homeland security is a national effort, not simply a Federal one. Governor Ridge served as Governor of Pennsylvania for almost 6 years. Prior to that he was elected six times to the United States House of Representatives with overwhelming majorities. He is also a decorated Vietnam veteran. Governor Ridge has earned my trust and the trust of the American people. He will make a great Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

Secretary of the Navy Gordon England will leave his position to serve as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. Prior to his time at the Department of the Navy, Secretary England served as executive vice president of General Dynamics Corporation from 1997–2001. In addition to his background in mergers and acquisitions, his private sector experience includes management experience at Combat Systems Group, General Dynamics Fort Worth aircraft company, and General Dynamics Land Systems. He is a graduate of the University of Maryland and the M.J. Neeley School of Business at Texas Christian University.

Asa Hutchinson currently serves as Administrator of Drug Enforcement (DEA). As head of DEA, Administrator Hutchinson has focused his efforts at dismantling high-profile drug trafficking organizations including the Arellano Felix organization. Prior to his tenure at DEA, Administrator Hutchinson served for three terms in the United States House of Representatives where he served on the House Judiciary Committee and Select Committee on Intelligence.

Once again, thank you for your dedication and commitment to homeland security and to our great country. During this time of transition it is extremely important that you continue to stay focused on your important